

## A MEDICAL MISSION IN CHINA.

CANTON, March 13th, 1893.

MY DEAR LADIES OF THE STEUBEN PRESBYTERIAL SOCIETY:

You remember when I was with you at the meeting in Campbell two years ago, how much I longed for more help. Now I am rejoicing in the presence of Dr. Bliss, who has already been an unspeakable relief to me. She is very lovely and most ready to help. I ought not, however, to interfere with the precious time for the study of the language. Some one had to go to Hainan last November, and I should have felt that I had lost my work if I had been obliged to be absent from it three months. It is a great pleasure to welcome Dr. Bliss back from Hainan after her trying trip, and already she has attended several cases for me since. Yesterday, Sunday, she spent all day on a steam launch to attend a patient forty miles away in the country, while I had my Sabbath quietly at home with my usual Sabbath work.

We had hospital rounds till half-past seven; hospital prayers at nine; Sunday School at half-past two; church service an hour later. I have for my Sunday School class the working women in and about the hospital. After dinner I have a little meeting with the women and girls of Mrs. Kerr's hospital school in the pleasant little school room. It is a very informal service. First, we have a little singing. There are some chronic patients who have been here long enough to learn to sing a little, and they feel very proud. You may laugh, since you know me, when I say I taught them. But this was the way: The baby organ was brought from the Chapel, and one of the medical students came to play. Some one recited the words, the student played the piece over several times, and then we commenced—I exerting myself to keep them together. For a few Sundays we did not try anything but “Happy Day,” but now we have four or five hymns to select from. Our blind patient, who is waiting to get strong enough for an amputation of the foot, must have her hymn book open to the place, and called last Sunday not to begin till she saw where it was. After singing I questioned them about the morning Sunday School lesson and the sermon. We had several prayers at intervals. I asked them to pray for a sad young woman in the hospital who had tried to commit suicide with opium. I asked them to pray that this temporary saving of her body might result in the eternal salvation of her soul. One woman who prayed was San Hing; that is, we call her San Hing cousin, because she comes from the district of San Hing. She has been a patient ever since I came back from America. She was covered with dreadful sores, the wife of a miserable wicked beggar. Now we can say she is almost well. Sometimes she has been better and sometimes worse, but on the whole she has progressed to-



wards health all the while. She is a very earnest Christian and we cannot afford to lose her out of the hospital, her influence and whole spirit is so very helpful. When she is well I want to employ her as a dresser, and have her go with me to see patients in their homes. I spoke to her this morning about it, and she seemed quite delighted. It will be a month at least before she will be able. She has learned to read in Mrs. Kerr's school and might become a Bible reader in time. It seems to me she can be more useful as a dresser, for she is sure to be a Christian worker wherever she is. Her simple prayers are very touching. Un Ho, the blind patient, also prayed. One time the latter thanked the Lord to convert the two in her ward who scoffed at religion. I hope to operate upon her next week if the weather continues favorable and the girl is in as good a state of health as two weeks ago. I just thought then I might dare to try when she was taken sick with fever and lost her appetite. She is picking up again now. We will wait till after the Communion Service next Sunday, as she is a member and will wish to attend. If the Lord spares her life, I think she will work for Him. Her lessons are recited in a clear tone of voice, and she has memorized twenty-six chapters of Matthew. Saw her standing on her well foot by the kitchen window one day repeating over a lesson to the hospital cook as she was busy with her work. You see I had formed an evening class for the working women. So, Un Ho was giving her an extra push with her lesson. Often some of the patients would come in and recite when I received the lessons of the week, and I would say, "I have not seen you in the school room." "No," they replied, "I did not feel able to come, but Un Ho taught me in the ward."

To return to our Sabbath meeting: After we have found out pretty well what can be repeated of the morning services, then the teacher and I try to enforce the lessons. We bring to mind important points overlooked. Then I come to my room and the pupils say as I go out, "We are much obliged."

At four o'clock it may be necessary to see some of the more important cases in the wards, but generally my good faithful Ah Kwan can attend to all that is necessary. At seven we have English service in this house. I enjoy having it here very much, though sometimes it is a care lest one is too cold or another too hot, or this one finds it too light, or that one too dark. Nevertheless it is a GREAT COMFORT to have the church in the house.

Our evening class, of which I spoke, has been opened very recently, and the working women are taking such an interest as my faith had not expected. To-day the teacher said: "Please have the school opened earlier in the evening, as some want to apply to the session this week for baptism, but they are afraid they will not know how to answer the questions." Oh, my faithless heart that had not expected this. After their first month of study we closed school for Chinese holidays. Closing day I asked A. Kwan to talk to them from Romans, 12th chapter, and she did so most practically. I told them that for religious influence I felt more depended upon them than upon the doctors, Bible women, teachers or preachers. They could act so as to make the patients hate the hospital and everything connected with it, or if they were Christians, and did their work as Christians should, that they could have more power than another to lead the patient to praise the fruits of Christianity and desire to become Christians themselves. The most were not professing Christians, and those who were had not always adorned the doctrine as I had wished. But you may know that the trials and provocations among sick folks of all kinds and conditions are not always small. The wounds that the Good Samaritan dressed were fresh ones, and his neighbor probably too much exhausted to be peevish and exacting. Besides, the Samaritan

had only a few hours with him, while all, I think, are apt to flag when the good, disagreeable work, begun with energy to-day, must be continued to-morrow and next day, and next week, too. And when one neighbor is better, there is probably a worse one to take her place.

Well, I thought I would tell you about the opium case that I had last week Wednesday. Just as I was about to retire, the call came, and quickly gathering together stomach pump and other appliances and remedies, I was off in a chair. The poison had been taken two hours at least before I arrived, and though I succeeded fully in clearing the stomach, yet a large amount of poison had passed beyond reach, and we were left to battle all night with its effects. I tried to persuade the family to bring her to the hospital, where everything necessary was at hand, and I could work to better advantage for her and with less exhaustion to myself. For a long time they insisted it was impossible, but finally seeing that she seemed to be failing, they concluded to try. Then no chair could be called, and I offered my chair while I walked. When we got her to the door the chair. Coolies refused for any amount of money to take her in. They were afraid she would die in their chair, and then they are so superstitious no one would ride in the chair again. We had some words and got a little noisy, but I determined I would not ride back with them, and told them I would not call them again. So we put our wits to work how to carry her. Her relatives tied her in a common bamboo chair and fastened poles to it with ropes, and then five of the men, her adopted brothers, took hold and off we started. It was slow traveling with our dim lanterns, and the men kept changing hands and stopping to rest. We had to parley before every street gate before we could get through. The watchmen at the gates looked at us very curiously, and sometimes I thought with suspicion; but we finally got through to the last gate. Here pounding and calling were of no avail—no one was in sight. One reconnoitered and found by going around a square we could compass our difficulty. We started, when the chair commenced to go to pieces. That had to be patched up several times before we arrived at our destination. But arrive we did at half-past three in the morning, and then there were many ready hands to help in the emergency. So then I gave orders and went for some rest. About nine o'clock in the morning the case got the lowest, but after that a little improvement began to occur. At ten came a second call. Alas, this followed the general rule of my opium calls. The patient was already dead when I arrived. A large house, but such a sad one. Draped in white mourning for the very recent death of a mother, weeping and wailing ceremonies over the body of the son who died the night before, and now that son's wife in her silk and satin embroidered grave-clothes lay in the adjoining room. I hastened away—I was powerless to comfort, and retired to the patient who was still improving some. By four o'clock she commenced to notice things and reply to questions. I directed that she was to remain with us for several days. The Bible woman and teachers all went at different times and talked with her, and tried to point her to the Savior. She stayed with us over Sunday, still looking the picture of despair, and then her brother came for her and she was obliged to go. We gave her books, as she could read, and now there is nothing more we can do but pray for her and her brother, whose hard heart, her friends said, had driven her to desperation.

It may be in a few weeks that Dr. Fuller will come back to us. That will be a great relief. When all the workers are once more in the field, I shall look to a trip into the country to our stations to which my heart has gone out so fervently, but which I have not dared to visit since my return. I trust Dr. and Mrs. Kerr will be



with us again in the fall, and so the way will be open for me to do so many things for which my heart yearns.

Thank you for your interest and love. Do not forget to pray earnestly for me and for the work. You can not realize how much your prayers are needed. I wonder where you are meeting this year, and who of the dear loved ones are present, and who are absent. May the meeting be a very helpful and Spiritual one. With love,

Your Missionary,

MARY W. NILES.

